Occaision: To be read at my deceased dad's celebration of life.

Audience is family, friends, coworkers. Location is a Hall. My dad's name is John Michael Downes, aka "Mickey". Fyi: I will email u a copy of his Obituary just as a reference or to use some items from it. MY MAIN PURPOSE IS TO SPEAK OF HIM AS A FATHER. The audience should know that he had SEVEN children whom he loved dearly. This speech should make his children feel that they were each loved in his own way uniquely.

As a former Intelligence Officer in the United States Navy, he ran a tight ship in our family home too. One of my favorite movies is "The Sound of Music" because there were a few parallells to our household. The 7 children were essentially stairsteps (7 kids in 12 years)! In my favorite movie...the children knew that when dad came home from work...you sat up a little straighter, cleaned up your messes, corrected your grammar, and got the hell out of the Bar Room (his safe haven away from the chaos...where his "Archie Bunker" chair sat. A special invite was needed to enter on most occaisions. I do not think my siblings or cousins understood this concept until much later when we had kids of our own! Needless to say, the discipline that our dad instilled in us remains with us all today. Don't get me wrong, dad had a soft spot for his kids..I still remember being my daughter's age...around seven and sitting in his lap and wondering what he had hiding for me in his polo shirt pocket...a lolipop that he got from the bank was my favorite! My dad had a witty sense of humor and would even tease us until we cried...he would laugh that loud laugh that only Uncle Jerry could out-do! And it would make it all better. That laugh will be with us Forever. I like my siblings and cousins have fond memories of green grass, creaky floors, woodstove smoke, bad cars, too many cats to count, a sloped kitchen...and the oldest oil burner in the country! All of this eutopia was found at 309 Union Street..a place near and dear to my heart. Oh believe me...life was not perfect and as we say in my family...it was full of "Ups and Downes". But through it all...we were loved by 2 hard-working parents who instilled all the great and unique characteristics in us all. Indeed I inherited the Downes frown and quick temper to match..but oh well...I cherish the fact that to this day my mom says..."Gosh that sounded just like your dad"! Dad loved his family and worshiped his mother and it brings us comfort to picture her warm embrace in Heaven...my dad was a good man.

(I want to say something special about each child):

Laura was the first born...the apple of her daddy's eyes...he took one look at her and what a beautiful little girl she was and he knew being a dad was the most amazing experience.

Dara was the next daughter...3rd in line but always bossy and in charge even at age two when she was found walking the family dog a block or so down the street in the wee morning hours...a wonderful parent she would later make. Natalie is the 4th in line sandwiched in the middle..my favorite memory of her is when as a teenager who snuck out of the house in the middle of the night..dad worried and stayed up waiting for hef to come home, and when she did...he opened the door for her and said "are you early or late"? He was glad she was home. Next comes Amy number 5...you can only imagine how proud dad was when she joined the United States Navy...and yes, it didnt hurt that she would eventually marry a Navy elite as well! Next at number 6 is Molly...the quiet one. He never said it...but he thought it...the smartest one. Finally someone as brilliant as him! He was so proud to be the dad of a phD! Then there's ME...number 7. It's okay...I know what you're thinking...the spoiled brat "Baby Katie" who got whatever she wanted. I figured out the why on this one! The folks were tired! Just give her whatever she wants to keep her happy and content. I assure you...I had a very happy childhood. Things were tough after the divorce...and I remember taking my dad's place in my parents bed...as therapy. The house was quiet and that was hard...but through it all I KNOW THAT MY DAD LOVED ME. My mother has never had a bad word to say about her Ex...but rather spoke highly of him. All divorced parents should follow my mom's example.

Last but not least...I saved Mickey for last. The 2nd born but most importantly the sole boy in the bunch and my dads namesake, JR. It goes without saying that dad loved all his kids and nieces, nephews and grandkids...BUT this was HIS BOY...dad and Mick had a father son relation that no one could match. Later in life this turned into a best friend relationship...the two of them kept in touch so frequently and Mickey was usually the one to tell me about all the things going on with dad. Mickey loved to hang with "pops" and the feeling was mutual. Whether fixing a kitchen floor together with the expletives running rampant..or picking crabs near the Chesapeake...the boat rides or just the chit chat on the cell...dad loved his boy! It is only appropriate that Mickey was the one who leaned over and squeezed dads hands as they rolled him thru the double doors into the OR. Mickeys words reassurred dad as they always did. Mickey never let his father down.

Thank God. Six of his children sat at dads bedside the night before his surgery...Each one of us felt so close to him. Dad was so warm and encompassing that night even though he had to lay flat afted his cardiac cath. He joked and laughed with us...he spoke to each of us and asked about Amy who lives in Oklahoma. We comforted him. We talked with him. We fed him his few bites of dinner and sips of gingerale. Then we told him Shhhhh...rest well. We each embraced him...kissed him goodnite...and said 'I love you dad'. He slept well.

<br><b>Group size:</b><br>Large (100+ people)<br><br><b>Group type:</b><br>Family<br><br><b>Speech event:</b><br>Meeting Hall<br><br/><b>Keyperson:</b><br> I will email obit

Deceased: John Michael Downes "Mickey" <br><br><b>Audience:</b><br>

Appreciate what a great dad he was<br>